

- a) a storage container for storing said treatment solution to be fed to a treating compartment of a treating apparatus;
- b) a supply portion for a dry component or dry components and/or dry mixtures of components of said treatment solution;
- c) a reception container for receiving and storing a solvent; and
- d) a mixing tank located between said supply portion, said reception container and said storage container, wherein said supply portion, said reception container and said storage container are connected to said mixing tank, and said storage container has an inlet opening which is connected to an outlet opening of said mixing tank for transmitting said treatment solution to the storage container.

#### **REMARKS**

Claims 1-11 are pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended in response to the rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

As an initial matter, enclosed is a Letter to Draftsman accompanied by a new formal drawing (FIG. 1). In response to the drawing objection, it should be noted that FIG. 1 depicts a mixing tank 18, referred to in the specification as "a mixing tank 18" (see page 7, lines 1-2), or "an additional mixing tank" (page 3, fourth paragraph) – both of these terms correspond to the same component. The word "additional" on page 3 indicates a component which is *additional* to the supply portion, the reception container and the storage container. With regard to the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, claim 1 has been amended to recite "a mixing tank," so as to eliminate any confusion.

With reference to the further rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as noted on Page 3 of the Office Action, claim 1 has been amended to remove the following language: "the treatment solution is prepared in the mixing tank based on the dry components received from the supply portion and the solvent received from the reception container." As amended, claim 1 requires that the storage container "has an inlet opening which is connected to an outlet opening

of said mixing tank for transmitting said treatment solution to the storage container." Specifically, the storage container/tank 10 has an inlet opening 38 which is connected to an outlet opening 34 of the mixing tank 18 (see specification at page 7, lines 1-2). In view of the amendments to claim 1, and the foregoing explanation, it is respectfully requested that the claim rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Applicants' claimed invention is directed to an arrangement for preparing a liquid treatment solution for treating photosensitive material, including: a supply portion for supplying one or more dry components; a reception container for storing a solvent such as water; a storage container for storing treatment solution to be fed to a treating compartment; and a mixing tank connected to the supply portion, the reception container, and the storage container, wherein the storage container has an inlet opening which is connected to an outlet opening of the mixing tank for transmitting the treatment solution to the storage container.

The above-described arrangement can provide significant benefits. Because the supply portion containing dry components and the reception container containing solvent are each connected to a mixing tank, treatment solution can be prepared in the mixing tank such that the treatment solution is automatically supplied to the storage container when a fresh supply of treatment solution is withdrawn from the storage container. The treatment solution in the mixing tank, which is prepared by mixing the dry components and solvent, is substantially the same as the "treatment solution" stored and withdrawn from the storage container. The treatment solution in the mixing tank has the same physical and chemical properties as the treatment solution stored in the storage container.

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,416,552 to Fakler, which was repeated from the previous Office Action. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Fakler fails to teach or suggest an arrangement for preparing a liquid treatment solution for treating photosensitive material which includes a storage container connected to a mixing tank for transmitting the treatment solution prepared in the mixing tank to the storage container.

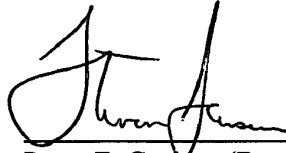
Fakler discloses an apparatus for replenishing a developer solution, the developer solution being mixed from liquid concentrate and tap water. As shown in FIG. 1, a meter 10 monitors the pH level of developer solution contained within a sump 11. If the pH falls below a preset value, then a pump 14 is activated to transfer solution from a tank 15 into the sump 11 (see column 3, lines 26-31). Therefore, the tank 15 contains developer solution having a different pH level than the pH of the developer solution contained within the sump 11. These different pH levels indicate different physical and/or chemical properties between the "developer solution" in the sump 11 and the "developer solution" in the tank 15.

In contrast, the Applicants' claimed invention recites a mixing tank in which the treatment solution prepared in the mixing tank has substantially the same physical and chemical properties of the treatment solution in the storage container. Specifically, when treatment solution is prepared in the mixing tank, the same "treatment solution" is stored in the storage container. Thus, when a "fresh supply" of treatment solution is withdrawn from the storage container, it can be replaced by substantially the same treatment solution from the mixing tank. The mixing tank recited in Applicants' claimed invention ensures that the replacement of treatment solution occurs automatically, without delay in replacing substantially identical treatment solution.

Moreover, as disclosed in column 3, lines 61-63 of Fakler, the volumes of liquids in tanks 20 and 23 are "known precisely" so as to make the concentration of the mixture in the tank 15 consistent from batch to batch. However, this requires a more complicated and expensive control device. In contrast, in the Applicants' invention, it is only necessary to control the preparation of the treatment solution in the mixing tank 18. Therefore, the treatment solution can be automatically replenished from the mixing tank to the storage container in a continuous process, without recalibrating the constituent amounts.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPENDIX A:  
VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) An arrangement for preparing a liquid treatment solution for treating photosensitive material, such as photosensitive film material or photosensitive paper material, comprising:
  - a) a storage container for storing said treatment solution to be fed to a treating compartment of a treating apparatus;
  - b) a supply portion for a dry component or dry components and/or dry mixtures of components of said treatment solution;
  - c) a reception container for receiving and storing a solvent; and
  - d) [an additional] a mixing tank [being] located between [and connected to] said supply portion, said reception container and said storage container, wherein said supply portion, said reception container and said storage container are connected to said mixing tank, and said storage container has an inlet opening which is connected to an outlet opening of said mixing tank for transmitting said treatment solution to the storage container [the treatment solution is prepared in the mixing tank based on the dry components received from the supply portion and the solvent received from the reception container].